E. 308
26.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

As it is Recorded in the 2. SAM.
Chap. 15, 16, 17, 18, & 19.

WITH SOME

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE SEVERALL
Passages thereof.

Too fit a Patterne for the present
Times, whereinto we are
FALLEN.

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ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

As it is Recorded in the second of SAM. *Chap.* 15, 16, 17, 18, & 19.

IN the two precedent Chapters, 13. and 14. you ſhall find, that *Abſalom* fully diſcovered his many Vices of Revengefulneſſe, Malice, Inſolency, Diſſimulation, Pride, Impatience, Vnthankfullneſſe, Iuſtifying himſelf in his faults, even in the Murther of his Brother *Amon*; and being thus ſeaſoned, he turnes Traytor; *For Treaſon never goes alone, it is alwaies Vſhered in with other notorious vices.*

And when he is reſolved to enter into the Rebellion, he firſt amuſes the Common people with an opinion of his Gallantry. [Chap. 15. v. 1. *He prepareth Horſes and Cha-*

riots, and fifty men to run before him.] *Such Shewes he knew would prevaile much with the multitude.*

Then he poſſeſſeth them with an opinion of his induſtry, and wins upon their affections, with his Affability. [v. 2. *He roſe up early, and ſtood beſide the way of the Gate, and it was ſo, that when any man that had a controverſie came to the King for judgement, then Abſalom call'd unto him and communed with him.*]

But yet this was not enough, unleſſe he ſlandered the preſent Governement, for he ſaith to him, [v. 3. *See thy matter is good and right, but there is no man deputed of the King to heare thee.*] *The Common ſort love to be flattered, and are naturally inclined to beleive ill of their Rulers.*

Then he is liberall in his Proteſtations, what wonders he would doe for a ſudden Reformation if he were in Authority; and ſaid moreover [v. 4. *O that I were made Judge in the Land, that every man which hath any Suite or Cauſe might come to me, and I would doe them Juſtice.*] *He muſt raiſe an expectation of the new, who goes about to alter the frame of the old Governement.*

And to winne upon them whom he intended to abuſe, he aboundeth in courteous and civill behaviour toward thoſe who make their application to him. [v. 5. *When any came nigh to him, to do him obeyſance, he put forth his hand and took him and kiſſed him*] *And herein he dealt ſubtilly to gaine a generall applauſe, he did not ſpeake ſome faire, and neglect others,* [but v. 6. *In this manner did Abſalom to all Iſraell that came to the King for judgement, and ſo Abſalom ſtole the hearts of the men of Iſraell.*]

Yet all this while he is not come to the height of his wickedneſſe, untill he make Religion the Stale for his impiety. [v. 7. *Abſalom ſaid to the King, I pray thee let me go and pay my Vow which I have vowed to the Lord in Hebron.*] *And the King gave him leave, and he went.*

But he having thus infatuated the hearts of the Men of *Iſraell*, inſtead of performing an Act of Devotion, as he pretended. [v. 10. *Abſalom ſent ſpies* (as Committees) *throughout*

throughout all the Tribes of Israell, saying, as soone as yee shall heare the sound of the Trumpet, then yee shall say Absalom raigneth in Hebron.] *A cheife City in Israell yee see, was the place where the Covenant was made, and the vow to be performed, and thus the Scene of Rebellion being laid in the sanctified City, it spred quickly throughout the rest of the Kingdome like Wilde-fire.*

Some (no doubt) went with *Absalom*, who were of the Plot, but [v. 11. *others went in their simplicity and knew not any thing.*] *Alas! its no hard matter to mislead many ignorant soules by example.*

But yet when they are gathered, they must be kept together, by the opinion that wisemen are in the Plot. Therefore, [v. 12. *Absalom sent for Ahitophell the Gilonite, Davids Counsellour, from his City, even from Gilok, while he offered Sacrifice.*] *There is never so much danger of seducing the Subjects, as when the Kings Councellours, when his great Councell turne head against him, specially under the counterfeit maske of Religion.*

Now, and not till now, is the Treason discovered to *David*, and *David* acquaints his Servants therewith, who were with him at *Hierusalem*, and he said to them, [v. 14. *Arise and let us fly, for we shall not else escape; make speed to depart least he overtake us suddainly, and bring evill upon us.*] *There is no dallying in time of eminent danger.* And [v. 15. *The Kings servants said to the King, behold thy servants are ready to doe whatsoever my Lord the King shall appoint.* Vers. 13.

And, [v. 16. *The King went forth and all his houshold after him*, and, [v. 17. *They tarried in a place that was far off.*] *I doe not finde that then, or at any time after, it was objected against* David *as a fault, that he then left the City, or His great Councell, who had first left him, and their Loyalty.*

Yet this is observable, That although the Kings departure were suddaine, it was not in disorder, [v. 18. *All his servants passed on besides him, and all the Cherethites, and all*

the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, even 600 men, which were come from Gath, went before the King.] *These were his Life-Guard, and his servants, and his Guard in those daies forsooke not their Master the King in his distresse.* And all this while, or after this, I doe not finde what the Kings fault was, which might provoke *Absalom* and the people to this Rebellion. *David was a good King, and a wise, and a valiant man, a man after Gods owne heart, and yet he was not free from this misfortune.*

Amongst others who attended the King, *Ittai* (who as is conceived was the Sonne of the King of *Gath*) was one who went over to *Hierusalem* with *David* from *Gath*. *It was not objected against* David, *or* Ittai, *as a fault, that he was a stranger, and yet did offer to assist the King against his Rebels; nor in truth is it a fault now, unlesse in this, that strangers should thus condemne the Naturall borne Subjects.*

But the King would have dissuaded *Ittai* from going with him, and said, [v. 19. *Wherefore goest thou with us? returne to thy place, and abide with the King, for thou art a stranger, depart thou therefore to thy place.*] *Strangers may not be compell'd to serve in such a case; but they may be entertaind, if they be willing.*

Yet *Ittai* would not be dissuaded, but answered the King thus, [v. 21. *As the Lord liveth, and as my Lord the King liveth, in what place my Lord the King shall be, whether in life or death, even there surely will thy servant be.*] *True fidelity is then best tryed, when the event is doubtfull, and good Princes shall do well to observe such followers and such Servants.*

Vers. 24, 27, 28. Amongst others, *Zadock* the high-Priest, and *Abiathar* and the *Levites*, would have gone with the King. *They did well to offer their Services, for in such times no Subject is exempted.* But *David* sent them back of purpose to gaine intelligence by their meanes. *Ahimaaz* and *Jonathan*, their two Sonnes, being trusty Persons fit for that imployment. *Good intelligence is an important piece of Service in time of*

Warre

Warre especially, and it is a principall point of wisedome to imploy fit Instruments.

Hushai, also a Councellour to the King would have gone with him. *Indeed I wonder how any Councellour can absent himselfe at such a time; but by the Kings owne directions, as* Hushai *did:* But he was sent back of purpose, that he being a sad wise man and a faithfull, might undermine the crafty Councell of *Ahithophel*. *Both in times of Warre, and of Peace, such expedients must be used, and then are not only lawfull but necessary, and amongst other policies, divertion is many times of great use.* Vers. 32, 33, 34.

As good Men upon such Accidents follow the King in his lowest Fortune, out of Duty and Conscience, so doe some wicked and false men, for by-respects.

Ziba, the Servant of *Mephibosheth*, comes to meet the King, and brings a Present with him, the outside was faire, to shew his duty to the King, but the true Errand was, to insinuate with the King, and by a false Lye to betray his Master. *This kind of Court craft is practiced too often; but a wise King, sooner or latter, will find those out who use it, and severely punish it.* Chap. 16. v. 1.

About this time also, the King met with another miscreant of another disposition. *Shemei* the Sonne of *Gera*; he finding the King in these streights railed at him, and cursed him to his face. *After-ages have also found many* Shimei's, *who stick not to raile at God's Annointed; but doubtlesse such will meet with their reward, as* Shimei *did, in the end.* Vers. 5.

Abishai being then present, his fingers itched to take off the head of this foule-mouth'd man; but *David* made other use of this Affliction, and would not give way thereto at that time. *There are seasonable times for patience, as well as for Justice, and good Princes will discerne the seasons thereof.* Vers. 9.

We left *Hushai* a while since, when he left the King to follow *Absalom*. But you observe it was by the King's speciall direction, and for his better Service. *Else it had been a* Vers. 16.

Crime

Crime unpardonable in him, had he done it of his owne head, and a good intent would not have excuſed it.

Verſ. 21, 22, 23. This Plot of ſending *Huſhai* to *Abſalom* proſpered well, for *Ahithophel* gave ſhrew Counſells indeed, for one was, That *Abſalom* ſhould goe into his Fathers Conçubines, and that publickly, that ſo the breach between him and his Father might be ſo wide, that it ſhould be irreconcileable. *A deſperate Counſell it was, that he and his Co-adjutors being put paſt hope of pardon, they ſhould be put paſt feare of retracting; And thus when the wicked Counſells of a Counſellour proſper, he is cryed up for an Oracle, as* Ahithophel *was.*

Chap. 17. v. 1. The other was, that *Abſalom* ſhould ſend him with a preſent ſtrength to ſurprize the King and his few followers, before they were provided. *Maturity in reſolutions, and celerity in execution of enterprizes of Warre, are of excellent uſe.*

Verſ. 7, 8. *Abſalom* put the firſt in practice preſently, his owne ungratiouſneſſe prompted him to that; but about the other *Huſhai* was conſulted with, and he by his wiſedome did happily divert it. [But this was appointed by the Lord, that the Counſell of *Ahithophel* might be defeated, that the Lord might bring evill upon *Abſalom*] And when *Ahithophel* found that his Counſell was not followed, impatient of the affront (as he eſteem'd it) and fearfull of the Succeſſe, he went home to his houſe, put his things in Order and hang'd himſelfe.] *Such, and ſuch let the end be of all thoſe Counſellours or others, who conſpire againſt their Soveraigne.*

Verſ. 14.

Verſ. 23.

Verſ. 5. *Huſhai* forthwith ſent intelligence to the King of theſe Conſultations and of the reſult thereof, whereby the danger was for the preſent diverted, but it was not held ſafe to rely thereon, for new Counſell might alter the caſe againe. *No greater danger then to be over ſecure.*

Verſ. 17. Whil'ſt *David* and the People with him were purſued by *Abſalom* in the Wilderneſſe, and the defection was very generall, yet ſome there were who came in to aſſiſt the

King

King with their Persons, others with their Purses, and some brought Provisions of all sorts to relieve the King's Army; amongst whom good old *Barzillai* was one. *Thus should all Loyall Subjects doe, none must stand Neutralls at such a time.*

By this time was the Kings Army well increased, and now the King divides it into three *Tertia's*, under the Command of severall Colonells or chiefe Captaines. *That was the course then, and that's the course still, where there are formed Armies, for Order must be kept in all great Actions, both in times of Peace and Warre.* Chap. 18. v. 1, 2,

To encourage the Souldiery, the King would have gone into the Battell in Person; But the People dissuaded him, saying [*Thou art worth ten thousand of us*] and the King hearkned unto them. *For the Person of the King ought not to be hazarded, but in Cases of inevitable necessity.* Vers. 3, 4,

At last the Battell was set, wherein God from Heaven fought for the King, for [*Absalom, the Arch-Traitor, in passing through the Wood was hang'd by the head in a Tree.*] *A fearfull Example, and fit for all Traytors to look back upon.* Vers. 9,

When this was related to *Joab* the Captaine of the Kings Host, and he understood, that *Absalom* was not yet dead, he was not satisfied till he had taken three darts, and strook him thorough the heart. *It is not safe to deale remissely with notorious and dangerous offenders.* Vers. 10, 14, &c.

But when this stroake was given and the Rebels dispersed themselves, *Joab* sounded a Retreat, and the Souldiers return'd from pursuing of *Israel*. *He had pitty upon the seduced multitude, when they had pitty on themselves, and repented them of what was amisse, and were willing to returne to their obedience.* Vers. 16,

When the Battell was thus ended, *Joab* sent Messengers to the King with the Tidings. *Observe this, that without the Mission of the Generall, it was not lawfull in the time of Warre to run with Newes from the Campe, although it be true which is told.* Vers. 20,

Vers. 33. Assoone as the King was inform'd of the Successe, and withall of the death of *Absalom*, he was passionately moved therewith. *Herein he discovered more the affection of an indulgent Father, then the Judgement of a prudent King, the time and place rightly considered.*

Chap. 19. v. 1, But when *Joab* (an old Commander) observed what impression this took with the Souldiery, he told the King very home of this unseasonable Error. *Some body must deale plainly and truly with the King in such Cases of importance; so it be done with discretion.* He told plainly to the

Vers. 6, King, That it would hazard the losse of the hearts of his People, if they should apprehend, that he loved his Enemies, and hated or neglected his Friends.

Vers 8, He therefore advised the King to rise up (for he was dejected) and to speake comfortably to the People, and the King followed *Joabs* Counsell, and he did so. *Good words, and a gentle Carriage cost little, and yet prevaile much with the Common People.*

Vers. 9, For upon this [*the People strove who should be first*] in shewing their duty to the King.

Vers. 13, The King also thought it no ill piece of Policie, to win over *Amasa* unto him by promises of preferment. *Such Policies must sometimes be used, but it is not safe to trust overmuch to a reconciled Enemy.*

Vers. 16, 17, Amongst others *Shimei*, and *Ziba*, of whom ye heard even now, the Tide being turn'd, came to congratulate with the King. *But he (as a wise King should doe upon time-servers) did set a marke upon them, and* Shimei *had his just reward.*

Vers. 24, *Mephibosheth* also, as soone as he (being a lame man) could come to the Kings Presence, attended him to expresse his joy for the Kings Victory, and in the Kings absence, had neither wash'd his Feet, nor dress't his Beard, nor wash'd his Clothes, till the King return'd in Peace. *They who cannot fight, must at such a time Pray, in one way or an other, every one as he is able, ought to expresse his Duty and Affection.*

And

And old *Barzillai*, who before in the Kings distresse, did attend him, and help to releeve his Army, came down now to help to Conduct the King over *Jordane*. *None is so old or so weake, but (if he be willing) will finde some way or other to expresse his love and Loyalty.* Verſ. 31,

The King gratiously accepted *Barzillai's* fidelity, and moved that he should goe along and live in Court with him, (*Barzillai* was for his quality, a Person might have befitted it,) but he was very aged, unfit for a Court life, and he was also wise and understood his owne imperfection, and unfitnesse to turne Courtier at that Age, and therefore modestly and thankfully he refused that gratious offer. *It were to be wish'd, that none were imploy'd in places for which they are not fit, and that men were so modest and so wise, as not to accept of such imployments when they are offered.* Verſ. 33,

Yet *Barzillai* tooke the opportunity to move the King, to confer that favour upon *Chimham* his Sonne, who was a young man, and fit to serve in Court. And the King granted his suite, and [*he tooke Chimham with him.*] *A gratious requitall of the King, to a faithfull and well-deserving Servant.* Verſ. 37, Verſ. 40.

This is the true Story of this Rebellion, faithfully extracted out of the Holy Writ, where it is Recorded; scarce to be paralel'd untill these unhappy Times, whence it seemes they have taken their President.

It needs no other Application.

FINIS.